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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. OMAR).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 15, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ILHAN OMAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

We stand before You, God Almighty, orienting ourselves to You, the giver and preserver of all life.

We offer our prayers and ourselves at the beginning of this new legislative week. Prepare and equip us to serve You faithfully, that by Your mercy, where we find ourselves in the days to come, and what we do in committee, in conversation, and in this Congress, would be ever defined by who You are and what You intend.

You have called us to be strong. Uphold us by Your mighty power. So may we be willing and able to take a stand against all things contrary to Your design. You have called us to be courageous. Encourage us by Your steadfast presence. So may we dare to face down the forces that attempt to compete with Your rule, Your authority, and Your power over and Your desire for Your creation.

For You, O Lord, are the source of our strength, the motivation for our efforts, the reason for our lives, and the hope of our salvation.

May our life today and our attitude for the week ahead, in both word and

deed, reflect the righteousness You have bestowed on us and reveal the love You have shown to us.

In Your sovereign name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 11(a) of House Resolution 188, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COHEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AMERICA IS ON THE MOVE AGAIN

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, today is a major day. Not as major as the day we had about 10 days ago when the House passed, with bipartisan support, the bipartisan infrastructure bill, but we are going to have a bill signing in the White House in just a few minutes by President Biden.

This is a big deal. We passed a bill that President Trump couldn't pass with a Republican Congress and without a Republican Congress. President

Biden and this Congress passed it. It is going to mean road repairs, bridge repairs, airport additions, bridge observations and repairs. Ports in our country will be improved. Broadband will be extended. The electric grid will be improved; people will get access. This is what used to be bipartisan—people working together to get the infrastructure of our country that moves goods to ports, goods to people, makes our country tick, helps business, puts jobs together.

This is an important bill. The Democratic Congress with 13 Republicans passed it. It is a great day to celebrate. America is on the move again.

CORRECT COURSE AND SAVE AMERICA

(Mr. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCCARTHY. Madam Speaker, we are just days away from voting on a 2,000-page bill that will very likely cost \$4 trillion; a bill that the White House Chief of Staff recently bragged, "twice as big in real dollars as the New Deal was."

Can you imagine that? Let that sink in: 2,000 pages, \$4 trillion, twice as big in real dollars as the New Deal was. Given its size, scope, given its unquestionable impact on American life, the American people deserve an honest, transparent debate about its true cost and content.

Yet, here we are, and not one Member of this House can honestly say they have analyzed, studied, or reviewed it. We know this because the Congressional Budget Office has made it clear that they won't have the final analysis on how much the bill costs until Friday, at the earliest. But even without the CBO report, we already have a pretty clear idea that the final price tag will be far more expensive than what Democrats are claiming.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Now, according to estimates from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School—one of the best business schools in the Nation—they say that new spending would increase by over \$4 trillion. Now, that is twice as much as the Democrats say it will cost. And it is not just the top-line cost, it is the tax increases, too.

According to Tax Policy Center, a center-left think tank, 20 to 30 percent of middle-income families will see their taxes go up in 2022. Now, that directly breaks President Biden's pledge that he wouldn't raise taxes on the middle class.

Let me make sure I state that clearly. According to Tax Policy Center—now this is a center-left think tank—says 20 to 30 percent of middle-income families. These are the ones who are already having a hard time because of inflation, who are already going to celebrate the most expensive Thanksgiving in their lifetime, paying for gas higher than they have seen, and inflation, to many of them, higher than they have ever had in their own lifetime. The President promised them he would not raise their taxes, but the Tax Policy Center says 20 to 30 percent are going to have their taxes raised.

The Democrats are trying to pull a bait-and-switch on the American people. Tell them one thing but vote on something else. The American people obviously know better than to believe a bill of this size would cost zero dollars.

I have listened to the President say—and I think he is on late-night TV—who would possibly say this bill would not cost money. The Wharton School of Business says it is more than \$4 trillion. It is only the President who first claimed, "if you are middle class, we won't raise your taxes."

We know that is not true. Wharton tells us again, yeah, it is not true what the President says. It is going to cost you \$4 trillion.

So in desperation, Speaker PELOSI is demanding the House vote on this bill even as we do not know exactly how much it will cost or how it will truly impact our lives. If that sounds familiar to you, it should. You see, it is exactly what Speaker PELOSI did just 10 years ago while trying to pass ObamaCare. Remember her famous words? "We have to pass the bill to find out what is in it." Well, here we go again.

So what is the rush? After all, several of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been very clear. They want to make sure that this bill actually matches up with what the White House says it will.

I just watched—before we depart, they wanted these same Members to pledge and sign a letter that they would vote for whatever this bill said if the others would vote for the infrastructure bill. Could you imagine your constituents looking at you, not even asking if you read what was in the bill because you pledged to vote for it before you could even read it.

Speaker PELOSI is rushing this bill to the floor because once they find out that Build Back Better does nothing to lower gasoline prices or reduce food prices, or fix our broken supply chain, or stop illegal immigration at the border. It doesn't make our streets any safer or our schools better for the children. Once they find all that out, they will reject it overwhelmingly.

Madam Speaker, I know that many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle understand this. But they truly do not want to vote on this bill because they know it can't be justified. Madam Speaker, I know that they know it can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars when inflation just hit a 30-year high. They know it just can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars on programs that benefit them politically while hiking taxes on the middle class. They can't.

Madam Speaker, they know it can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars for mass amnesty during the worst border crisis in history. They know it can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars that would make gasoline even more expensive than it currently is on a 7-year high.

Madam Speaker, they know it can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars to hire 87,000 new IRS agents to spy on any American who spends as little as \$28 a day. They know it can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars to make the labor crisis worse by turning the child tax credit into welfare without any work requirement.

They know it can't be justified to spend trillions of dollars to abandon the Hyde amendment, allowing for taxpayer-funded abortion on demand. And they know it cannot be justified to spend trillions of dollars to dictate our children's education standards so that Washington has the final say in what our children learn.

On the merits, this bill deserves to be defeated. Fundamentally, it is anti-worker, anti-family, anti-jobs, anti-energy, and anti-American. From bank surveillance to bailouts, it takes the problems President Biden and Washington Democrats have created over the past 9 months and makes them much, much worse. Its destructive policies should alarm every American.

Madam Speaker, Democrats aren't just ignoring what is going on throughout the country. It is worse. They aren't even pretending to listen. And that is the fundamental difference between Democrats and Republicans.

Madam Speaker, the Democrats are focused on securing the Speaker's legacy. House Republicans are focused on solving the labor crisis.

Democrats are focused on so-called equality. We are focused on quality education.

Democrats are focused on payoffs for illegal immigrants. We are focused on protecting the border.

Democrats are focused on the Green New Deal. We are focused on lowering the gas prices.

Democrats are focused on mandates. Republicans are focused on more freedom.

When you look at those differences, it is no wonder that the American people want a change in leadership.

Madam Speaker, just this morning, a Democrat in the Texas House of Representatives changed parties. This comes just two weeks after voters from Virginia to Seattle rejected the radical Democrats and voted to return to commonsense.

Madam Speaker, you understand this very well, I know, that Joe Biden won Virginia by 10 points; he won New Jersey by 16.

Madam Speaker, on that night, it wasn't just Virginia that flipped but the races in New York; the races in your own State, in Minneapolis; and in Seattle for the city attorney.

Madam Speaker, there was good news and bad news that night. In New Jersey, the good news for many people across this country was a Republican truck driver with less than \$200 defeated the second most powerful elected position in New Jersey—the Democrat Senate President. That was the good news. The bad news in this new Biden America is we just lost another truck driver when we need so much more help.

It is not just the message, it is the mandate. Not for left versus right, but for right versus wrong.

□ 1415

My question is: Will Washington Democrats listen?

So far, Madam Speaker, that answer is no. They are focusing on themselves and on the demands of Speaker PELOSI.

Madam Speaker, I know today the longest serving Democrat in the Senate announced retirement. I don't know what plans Speaker PELOSI has. I know she has been to Europe three times in the last 3 months. I don't know if she plans on staying longer.

I know in her press conference that she said that this will be the culmination of her career. Maybe that is why she is pushing so hard for people to vote on a bill that costs \$4 trillion that breaks the promises of President Biden before anybody could actually read it or analyze it. I just think that is wrong.

But we have the chance this week to correct course and save America.

Madam Speaker, so many Americans—Independents, Democrats, and Republicans—went to the polls last Tuesday. It wasn't a little pocket of one place said one thing and one said another. It was overwhelmingly resounding, a rejection of the current policies of this majority.

Madam Speaker, this one-party rule of Washington in 1 year has given us not just inflation but rising gasoline prices, a labor crisis, a supply chain crisis, chaos, crime, and, worst of all, failure.

As we sit here today, Madam Speaker, Russia brings thousands of their

military to the border of Ukraine. They feel empowered because they are able to have a pipeline that President Biden okayed but that America was denied.

We watch China pressure Taiwan even further.

Madam Speaker, we still have Americans stuck in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, it is just a little more than a week away from Thanksgiving when millions of Americans will gather together. But those events may be smaller because they may not be able to afford the gas to drive to see their family. They may not be able to afford the most expensive Thanksgiving dinner they have ever had. They are looking to Washington to do better.

Madam Speaker, the worst thing possible we could do is not to listen to them. They have spoken loudly, and they have spoken clearly that the path that we are on is wrong. They cannot afford it; they cannot accept it; and they expect us to do better.

But an idea to rush a bill this large and not have any analysis and to think the American people won't understand it—they have watched what happened this year under one-party rule, and on Tuesday, they said that will change. I just hope, Madam Speaker, that this body listens and waits for the report because they will not be able to justify a "yes" vote for it.

America cannot afford it. For the good of the country, let's take ahold of it, and let's defeat this bill.

RECOGNIZING BRENT'S FIREHOUSE COFFEE

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the generosity and Iowa nice spirit of a couple from my district.

Recently, Brent and Amy Brightman, the owners of Brent's Firehouse Coffee in Camanche, presented the Camanche Police and Fire Departments with \$2,000 each in what they hope to be the first of an annual donation to their city's first responders.

When asked about the generosity of their donations, Brent, who has served as a volunteer firefighter in Camanche for over a decade, said that they started Brent's Firehouse Coffee not only to support their community but to support first responders.

Iowa has some of the best businesses and first responders, and I am beyond proud to see our community come together to support one another.

I thank Brent, Amy, and the first responders of Camanche for their continued and unwavering service to our community.

ALARMING RATE OF INFLATION

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, as if things could not get any worse under this administration, we found out last week that inflation is now at a 30-year high. This comes as Americans are worried about the cost of Thanksgiving dinner, the cost of putting gas in their cars, and even the cost of heating their homes for the winter.

Under this administration, inflation has metastasized at an alarming rate across the country. Every small town in America feels the strain of inflation. Every American family feels it. Every hardworking taxpayer feels it. Yet, this administration is too blinded by its own ignorance to figure out what is happening.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the so-called Build Back Better agenda was just a lie this entire time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOWMAN) at 5 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

STUDY ON DISPARITIES ASSOCIATED WITH RACE AND ETHNICITY WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN BENEFITS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1031) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on disparities associated with race and ethnicity with respect to certain benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1031

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE STUDY ON DISPARITIES ASSOCIATED WITH RACE AND ETHNICITY WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN BENEFITS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study—

(1) to assess whether there are disparities associated with race and ethnicity with respect to—

(A) compensation benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

(B) disability ratings determined by the Secretary, with specific consideration of disability evaluations based on pain; and

(C) the rejection of fully developed claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary; and

(2) to develop recommendations to facilitate better data collection on the disparities described in paragraph (1).

(b) **INITIAL BRIEFING.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall brief Congress on the initial results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

(c) **FINAL REPORT.**—Not later than 240 days after the date on which the briefing required by subsection (b) is conducted, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a final report setting forth the results of the study conducted under subsection (a), including the recommendations developed under paragraph (2) of such subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 1031.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1031. To build a better, more welcoming, and more equitable Department of Veterans Affairs, we must take a hard look at how VA can earn back trust. Too many veterans have experienced barriers to receiving the benefits that they have earned from service to our country.

I believe that VA care and benefits must be distributed fairly to all eligible veterans, regardless of social or physical disparities. That is why we must look back to document whether veterans have been unjustly denied benefits, address the root causes of disparities, and ensure equitable treatment moving forward.

Such an important evaluation will certainly require digging into vast datasets, evaluating agency processes, and laying the framework for meaningful recommendations to effectively make any needed course corrections at VA. That is why this bill mandates that the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office perform this examination.

Under Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK's legislation passed by the Senate, GAO would study racial and ethnic disparities regarding VA compensation benefits, including VA disability ratings and rejections of fully developed claims for benefits under laws administered by VA.